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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 001033

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EUR/NCE FOR ERIC FICHTE, WHA/CCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/23/2016
TAGS: [PREF](#) [SMIG](#) [CU](#) [EZ](#)
SUBJECT: CZECHS ARE CONSIDERING REQUEST TO RESETTLE CUBAN
MIGRANTS

REF: STATE 124445

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Mike Dodman
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary. The Czech MFA is considering reftel request to resettle Cuban political migrants in the Czech Republic. The Ministry of Interior would prefer to wait until 2008, when a proposed change in resettlement policy would facilitate such resettlement, but will defer to the decision of the MFA. Post predicts that the MFA will decide to accept at least some of the migrants, barring any unforeseen shift in Czech foreign policy that may come with a new Czech government. End summary.

12. (C) Poloff met with the Czech Ministry of Interior's Head of the Unit for Policy, International Relations and Information on Countries of Origin Pavla Fridrichova on August 1 to discuss the resettlement of Cuban political migrants in the Czech Republic. Fridrichova said the MOI is inclined to recommend against resettling the migrants in the short term, preferring to wait for the implementation of a new resettlement "scheme" proposed by the MOI. (Note: the scheme has not been publicly announced. End note.) This scheme, which must be approved by the government, would improve the legal framework for resettling migrants in the Czech Republic starting in 2008. However, Fridrichova said the MOI would agree to resettle the migrants on an ad hoc basis sooner, if directed to do so by the MFA.

13. (C) At a recent meeting in Washington, Deputy FM Tomas Pojar asked the USG to clarify that the migrants are political, rather than economic, migrants. Poloff and Polec Chief met with MFA Director of the Americans Department Jakub Skalnik on August 23, and confirmed the migrants are political dissidents based on the finding by DHS/USCIS (Citizenship and Immigration Services) asylum officers that the migrants have a "well-founded fear" of persecution and/or torture. The MFA continues to evaluate the request.

14. (C) Comment. Given the current Czech government's sympathy and support for Cuban dissidents, we predict the MFA will agree to resettle at least some of the migrants (particularly those with compelling stories of political repression). This resettlement effort would probably take place in the short term rather than being delayed until 2008, especially in light of the political uncertainty in Cuba. However, it is too early to predict the details, such as the number of migrants or the timeline. This assessment is predicated on the assumption that Czech foreign policy will not change significantly once a new Czech government is formed, the timeline for which is still uncertain. Assuming the Czechs decide in principle to resettle some or all of the migrants, the Czechs will likely request detailed biographical information to help them determine which, if any, migrants

should be considered for resettlement. The Czechs may also want to travel to Guantanamo Bay to meet the migrants before making a final decision. End comment
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